(c) whether there is any permanent scheme to end the crisis of coal in the company for ever?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) faced severe coal crisis from last week of May, 2007 till second week of August, 2007.

(b) On being intimated by the Company about the severe coal shortage, the Ministry of Mines had immediately taken up the matter with Ministry of Coal and the Ministry of Railways. Consequently, Bharat Coking Coal Limited/Indian Railways were advised to supply additional 1.5 rakes per day for 7 weeks (total 75 rakes) besides linkage, as an immediate interim measure which has enabled the Company to tide over the current crisis.

(c) For permanent solution of the problem, it may be essential to increase the coal linkage quantity from the present 4.85 million tonnes per annum to 5.55 million tonnes per annum by Merry Go Round (MGR)/Rail from Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), Talcher, for which NALCO has submitted the necessary application to the Ministry of Coal.

Allocation of mines to POSCO

1598. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether POSCO, a foreign capital based company, which is going to set up a factory in Orissa, has been provided iron ore mine on lease;

(b) if so, when the same was provided alongwith the name of the mine allotted to it; and

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The State Governments are the owners of Minerals and grant Mineral Concessions including Mining Leases and prior approval of the Central Government is required for grant of Mineral Concession for minerals covered in First Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, which also includes iron ore. The Central Govemment has not so far received any proposal seeking prior approval for grant of Mining Lease in favour of POSCO from the State Government of Orissa.

Policy on allotment of mineral blocks

1599. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state keeping in view of the fact that there is a huge demand for allocation of mineral blocks from private sector industry, Government are considering to come out with a policy, wherein the necessities of PSUs would be taken care of?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): Existing provisions of the Mines and Minerals

(Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 already provide for reserving mineral bearing areas in favour of Central/State public sector companies for undertaking prospecting or mining operations.

Allocation of iron ore mines

1600. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that huge iron ore blocks are allocated to a recent outfit in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a request from Vizag Steel Plant for allotment of mineral blocks is pending before Government;

(c) if so, the steps taken in this regard;

(d) the reasons for leaving a PSU high and dry in allocation of the iron ore blocks; and

(e) whether this policy would be instrumental in degrading the well established Vizag Steel Plant in near future?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) The State Governments grant mineral concessions and prior approval of the Central Government is required only in respect of minerals mentioned in the First Schedule to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 including grant of mineral concession for iron ore. Details of prior approvals accorded by the Central Government for grant of mineral concessions are available on the website of the Ministry of Mines (*www.mines.nic.in*).

(b) and (c) Two proposals for reservation of areas for undertaking mining operations for the mineral iron ore in the State of Orissa and Chhattisgarh in favour of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited/Visakhapatnam (RINL/VSP) have been received in the Ministry. State Governments of Orissa and Chhattisgarh have informed that the areas sought by RINL/VSP are not available for reservation.

(d) and (e) RINL/VSP have informed that a number of mining lease applications of the company for iron ore in the States of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are under consideration of the State Governments.

Financial disbursement to minorities

1601. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria, other than population, that have been used to classify the zones/areas for financial disbursements to minorities;

(b) the total number of areas identified therefor; till now; and

(c) the details of assistance provided, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (c) No zone/area has been identified for financial disbursement to minorities. However, 90